

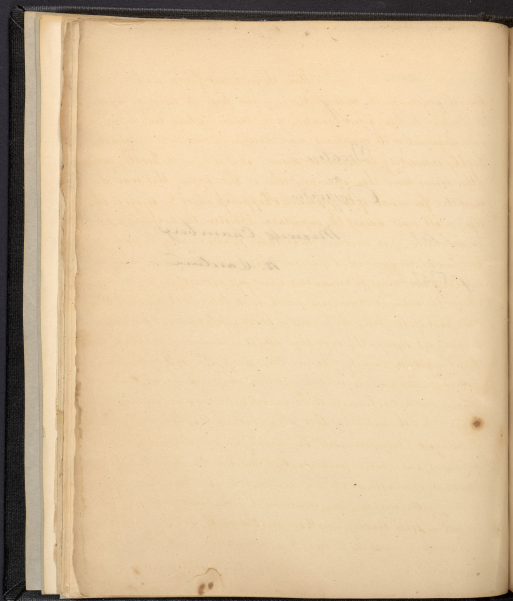
A
Treatise
on
Dyspepsia.

Wad del.

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J. Fisher.

N. Carolina.



From the important function which the
Stomach performs in the animal Economy, and from its being an organ
so essential to life, a consideration of the Causes which tend to produce
a derangement of its operations must necessarily constitute a subject
highly interesting to medical Science. As it is upon the healthy operation
of this viscus more than upon any other in the system, that man is
enabled for much of the pleasure & happiness which he enjoys in this
life; so all must admit the importance, & perceive the necessity of an
investigation of its disorders, that their existence may be readily
known & distinguished & that our exertions or attempts, to remedy or
relieve them, may be conducted upon just & scientific principles.
From the intimate connexion which exists between the stomach & every
other part of the body by means of blood vessels & nerves & from its
prominent sympathy over them all, it is rendered liable to disease
from a greater variety of causes, than any other part of the Human
Fabric. The various morbid affections which occasionally affect this
organ, are not intended to be investigated or considered in this
essay. But the nature of that disease which has been called by
Physiologists Dyspepsia, with the means best adapted to remedy or
relieve it, will more particularly constitute the subject of the sub-
sequent observations. As my design is to give merely a brief
history of the disease, my own ideas, together with such as I have
acquired from Authors who have written on the subject, will be
conducted as much as is any how compatible with clearness &
purity. Having delivered these preliminary remarks,

I will now proceed with the more particular consideration of the subject before me.

The first circumstance which arrests our attention in viewing the phenomena of this disease & which solicits investigation, is the "pass in quæ" of morbid excitement. Upon this point several opinions have been entertained. Some have supposed it to be seated almost exclusively in the muscular fibres of the stomach, others place it in the nervous coat, while a few have maintained its existence to be principally in the blood-vessels, villous coat &c. Without adopting either of these opinions, I am induced to believe, that in every case of well marked dyspepsia morbid excitement is present in all the parts appertaining to the stomach, though the degree of this excitement, is no doubt, often very different in each of them. I take this opinion to be well founded, from the phenomena exhibited by the disease. Thus, not the irritability, tension, morbid sympathies & morbid secretions, together with the irregularity in the pulses; all indicate the existence of morbid & irregular action in the several parts named above. The internal connexion which exists between the several parts of the stomach, & the known influence of sympathy in every part of the body, but more particularly for the organ, give additional assistance in confirmation of the truth of the opinion. As the shortness of my time precludes the possibility of collecting & arranging the various arguments & facts that might be adduced in its favour, I shall for the present consider it as established, & will go on to enumerate the causes which induce it. And first of the remote causes.

These may be divided into direct & indirect, or such as act immediately upon the stomach itself & such as act through the

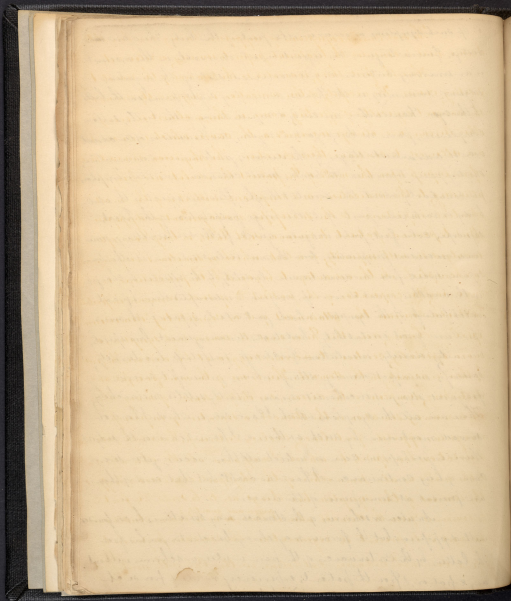
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medium of the system in inducing debility is this vessel. To the first
order of Causes belong 1st Improper diet 2nd Excess in Eating. 3rd Improper use
of narcotic substance, as opium, tobacco &c. 4th Frequent vomiting, whether
naturally occurring or artificially excited. 5th The too frequent use of
sugar, acids, & other crude substances. Of the second order of Causes,
there are 1st The severe attack of an acute disease 2nd An indolent or
sedentary life. 3rd Excessive indulgence of the venereal desires. 4th The
constant application of the mind to study or business of any kind. 5th Frequent
indulgence of the angry passions, as hatred, anger, jealousy, revenge, &c. also
the reactive passions of fear, grief & despair, to which may best add
the depressed tender passions of love. 6th Exposure to cold & moist air
without excess. The separate or combined action of these causes
upon the stomach, produces in it debility, which forms its predispo-
sing cause to disease.

Among the exciting Causes I may enumerate, Heat, Cold,
distension, abstinence, &c. and indeed any of the remote Causes
may become the exciting Cause. These Causes acting upon an
accumulated excitability, which is the effect or consequence of debility,
produce the proximate cause or morbus ipso. This is character-
ized by the following symptoms. These I shall divide into primary
& secondary or such as appear in the Chyliferous viscera & such as
appear in other parts of the body from sympathy. To the first belong
Acidity, Heat in the stomach, acrid eructations, smelting, of albi-
cratory Fluids, frequent vomiting, flatulency, a rancid stult of the
alimentary matter, worms in the intestines, Cholera, obstinate con-
stipation or alternations of constipation & diarrhoea, hiccough & the
passage of the Food through the intestines without it, undergoing
alteration.

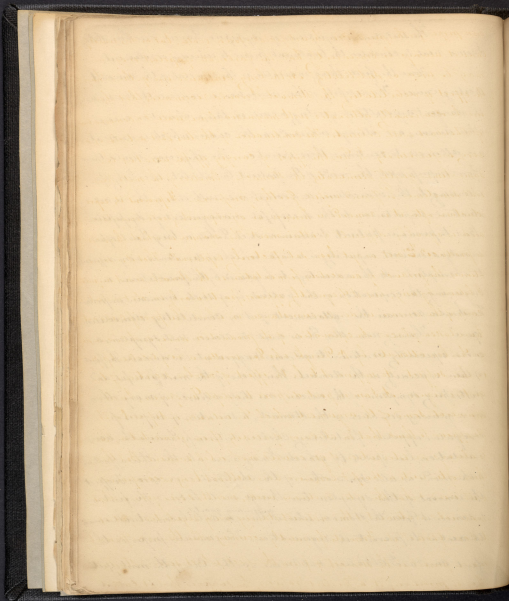
2. Of such symptoms as occur in other parts of the body. These are vertigo, furred tongue, this is particularly observable in the morning is an unerring criterion of a disordered state of the digestive organs, swimming in the head, dimness of sight, pain in the balls of the eyes, headaches, an early & rapid decay of the teeth, sallow complexion, pain in the epigastric region, this however is often absent even in advanced stages of the disease; pulmonary consumption, shifting pains, tremor in the hands, small catenaceous pustular eruptions, particularly about the wrists & thighs, flushings affecting the whole body or particular part of it, throbbings, palpitation of the heart, syncope, cold feet, pulse irregular, quick, feeble & intermitting, sometimes no evident perspiration from the most violent exercise at other times copious sweat from moderate exertion, liability to be affected by changes in the weather, great drowsiness, irregular & interrupted sleep & great watchfulness of the symptoms which particularly appear in the mind. There are great irritability, habitual discouragement, low spirits, timidity, anxiety, inattention, fickleness, fastidiousness, taciturnity, sadness, imperfect memory, strange whims, proneness to reveries, frequent strange & incoherent dreams & lastly settled melancholy. These are all the symptoms which I have seen, or which I have observed mentioned by such authors, & I have read on the subject. There is perhaps no case in which all these occur, yet in several cases of long continuance, I have no doubt but that most of them are present at some period of the disease.

An ulcer or schirrus of the stomach may sometimes be confounded with dyspepsia; but the former may always be distinguished from the latter, by the continuance of the pain in ulcer or schirrus, without any excretion, & from the patient's experience no relief from such

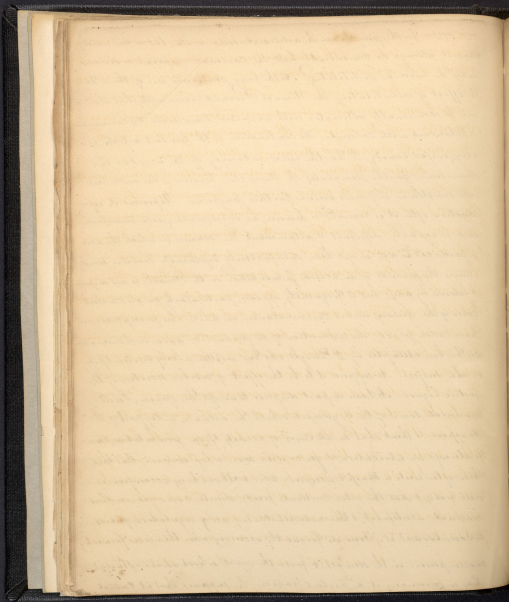


The seat, Causes & symptoms of dyspepsia having now been stated,
I come next to consider the treatment proper to remedy or relieve it.

Here the first thing indicative, is the removal of the remote &
exciting causes. The necessity of this indication is sufficiently obvious, as
the danger & difficulty of effecting a cure in this, or almost in every
other disease, are always increased, as the causes which induced it
are allowed to continue their operation. The physician should there-
fore impress upon the mind of his patient the absolute necessity of
attending to this indication, as a compliance with it, is of the most
essential importance to the successful management of dyspepsia.
But to persuade patients to renounce such habits as they have often
indulged in with impunity, is a task which is sometimes very difficult
to accomplish. In the advantage to be gained by the practitioner, in
engaging the cooperation of the patient, is of such immense importance,
he should consider the attainment of it as constituting "dimidium
operis". Having done this, he is next to remove such symptoms, as
more especially conduce to increase & aggravate the disease. The first
of these is acidity in the stomach. This is one of the most painful and
destroying symptoms of the disease, & is itself a source of many others
as a gnawing sensation in the stomach, a sensation of emptiness,
irregular appetite, flatulency, cholera, costiveness, headache, acrid
evacuation, low spirits, to which I may add all the other affections
of the mind as also some other of the chylipositive viscera. To effect
the removal of this symptom two things are to be done. The first is
to remove it from the stomach when it, there, ^{exists in such quantity} ~~is~~ as to become troublesome,
the next is to prevent its regeneration. The remedies proper in the
first case are ^{the} alkalies & alkaline earths. One of the most effectual

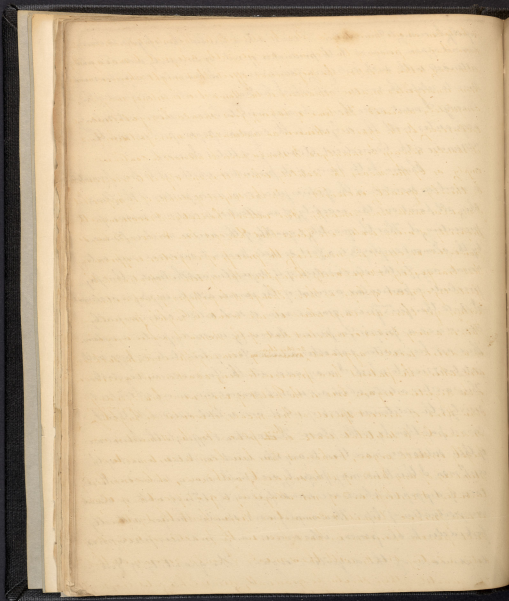


and proper for this purpose is the artificial soda water, but as this remedy cannot always be conveniently had, the Carbonat of potash or soda may be used as a substitute. In the long continued use of these the effect of acerbulating the stomach, I would recommend that they are be occasionally alternated with magnesia lime water & a combination of Rheubarb with Colicumb. The combination of the two last articles is a very useful remedy. It has the effect of carrying off the acid but the same time gently stimulates the stomach. Emetics of the same kind will sometimes be found useful for this purpose. To prevent its repetition after it is removed is however, an object much greater importance and is equally difficult of attainment. The manner in which this acid is produced I do not as yet have satisfactorily explained. That it is sometimes the product of an acerbous fermentation in the stomach, is not disputed & believed by any, but it frequently appears, particularly in the most violent cases of the disease, under circumstances, in which this process could not have taken place. An explanation of its production under such circumstances has been attempted by Dr. Wright, who has written a very excellent paper on this subject. He supposes it to be the effect of morbid secretion of the gastric liquor. As I am in part disposed to adopt this opinion, I will enumerate some of the arguments which he adduces in support of it. He appears to think that in all cases of acidity from fermentation, there is always an eructation of gas or wind more or less evident. But that there often exists a sharp & corrosive acid without being accompanied with wind, & that this often continues weeks, months & even years without material abatement, & this notwithstanding every regulation of diet to counteract it. From its frequently occurring when there is no fermenting matter present in the stomach & from the effect which several studies has, in procuring it, as ^{also} violent purging, he supposes that it cannot

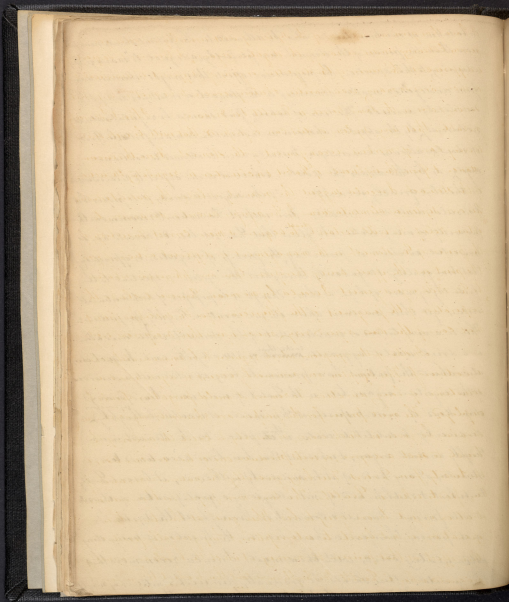


possibly be owing to fermentation. The cause which has been thus ascribed, he states, does not appear adequate to the production of such so suddenly induced and attended with such distressing consequences. As it would occupy too much time to relate the various facts which he has advanced in support of his theory, I must refer those who may wish to become more particularly acquainted with the subject, to the original paper, published in the "Memoirs of the Connecticut Academy of Arts & Sciences."

Phlogon is the source of its production, whether it be from fermentation, a mercurial secretion of the gastric juices, or a decomposition of this fluid, they all point out the necessity of an attention to diet, as a means of preventing it. That the quantity & quality of this acid is much influenced by the aliment employed, is a fact so well known to medical men, as to render any further elucidation of it superfluous. The limits of this essay preclude a particular account of the various articles employed as aliment. I shall therefore ^{now} give a general view of such articles, as are usually considered as proper for persons labouring under dyspeptic symptoms. These are beef, mutton, & all other animal food of lean texture; eggs, milk, potatoes, &c. to which I may add all the farinaceous vegetables. There are two articles, which are in such general use, among all classes of society, & the deleterious effects of which are so little attended to, that I cannot pass them by in this place. These are tea & coffee; & the liberal use of these substances, more than to any other which constitutes a part of the diet, men, I think we may properly ascribe the many severe & obstinate cases of dyspepsia which are now so frequently to be met with in almost every situation of life. Their employment should therefore be strictly forbidden to all persons, who are in any manner predisposed to diseases of the digestive organs. The quantity of food

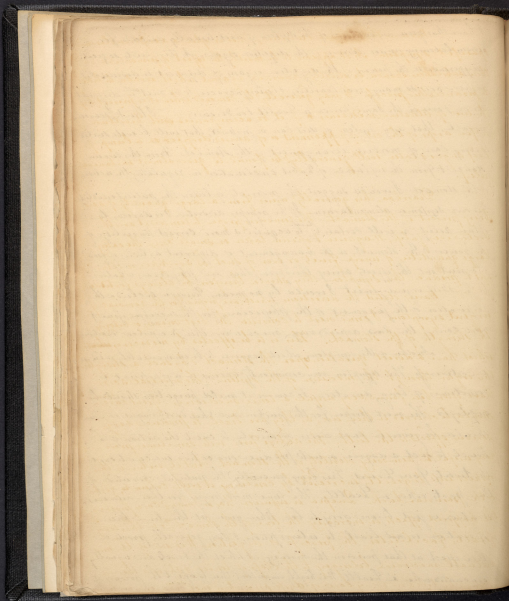


to be taken at one time. Should also be attended to. The patient should exert
more than the powers of the stomach are perfectly adequate to manage. By
attending to this direction, the prejudicial effects that might otherwise arise
from undigested matter remaining in the stomach or intestines may be
completely avoided. The time of taking food should be regulated almost
exclusively by the appetite; whenever an inclination is manifestly for food
it should always be indulged. It should never be allowed to continue
empty, as by this means the debility which it is our object to relieve would
be thereby greatly increased. In the subject of drink, it is proper that
I should make some remarks. Here without hesitation I recommend the
propriety of using water. No fluid that has yet been discovered has so
powerful an effect in promoting the process of digestion, or affording
that tranquility & regularity throughout the system so essential to the
full enjoyment of life as this. Though it be supposed of such universal
virtue, yet there are cases where it would be highly prejudicial.
This is a very torpid or indolent state of the stomach, water used alone
as a drink would aggravate, ^{rather than} ~~relieve~~ remedy the evil. In such cases
also where the patient has previous to being attacked with a disorder
of the digestive organs, been in the habit of using wine, brandy, or any
other kind of ardent spirit, at his meals, it would be highly
advisable to substitute water in ^{their} place. For the stomach is an
highly excitable organ, & when it has been long accustomed to a
stimulus of any kind, if it be suddenly withdrawn, it becomes highly
turbulent & restless, and if not allayed by a gradification of climate
it will produce tumult & commotion throughout the system. In
such persons, therefore, as have been in the practice of using strong
stimulating drinks with their meals, I would recommend that
the quantity of these should be gradually diminished, until they might



I have thus given an outline of the system of diet usually directed for persons labouring under disorders of the digestion organs. As there exists so great a difference in the powers of the digestion organs of different individuals, & as there are so many peculiarities, & idiosyncrasies, to be met with in different persons, & even in the same person in health & in disease, I think scarcely probable, that any system of diet can be proposed, that will be well suited to every case of morbid derangement of the stomach. From this circumstance & from the influence of habit & inclination in regulating the action of the stomach, I would suggest the propriety of leaving the patient to select his own systema alimentarium. If the patient, however, is a stranger, to obtain relief, he will certainly, ^{first} to acquire a more correct knowledge of the power of his stomach in the management of different articles of food & to point out the effects arising therefrom, than any physician whatever be his skill or judgement. I would by no means, however, exclude the cooperation of the judgement of the physician, for the successful issue of most cases of this kind requires very much more than his personal assistance.

Another of the symptoms which requires to be immediately relieved is constipation. This symptom very commonly occurs in dyspepsia & is sometimes of long duration. To remove it mild purgatives should be employed. The most proper for this purpose are rhubarb & magnesia. These should be given in such doses, as merely to excite the action of the bowels, to meet a discharge, or will produce one or two evacuations in the twenty four hours. This being generally the natural operation of these parts when in health. The time most proper for their administration is just before going to bed. When given at this time their operation is not liable to interruption, & they generally produce their effect at that period in the morning at which the bowels are usually evacuated when in health. It is highly important then to assist the powers of



Wine in the stomach is distending. This is often a very troublesome & painful symptom. As it appears to be mostly the effect of fermentation, these substances should be strictly guarded against which would be likely to produce this process. It may generally be removed when it is present by the use of Alkaline medicines, & if it be accompanied with flatulency a few drops of the oil of peppermint or of anise dropped on a lump of loaf sugar & eaten will generally be found to give almost instantaneous relief.

Diarrhoea, this generally arises from a large quantity of acid being present in the stomach. The remedium proper to remove it are the Oculi croci, fulp, Magnesia & opium taken in small doses. The eating large quantities of unripe fruit or even of such as are ripe, is often apt to produce this symptom; they should therefore be always forbidden.

Having stated the directions which are proper for the removal of urgent symptoms, I cannot next to consider the best means of restoring the strength of the stomach. This is to be effected by medicines, ~~which~~ which have a direct operation upon the stomach, & by such as strengthen this organ through the medium of the system. The mineral acids have often been found very useful as tonic medicines. Great ^{care} should be observed in their use, as they are liable to produce very serious effects on the teeth. The Rubigo ferri with sometimes prove very useful to remove debility of the stomach, but its action in this respect will be greatly increased by combining it with colony, gentian or the peruvian bark. Quapica is superior, has in many cases produced the happiest effects in increasing the tone of the stomach, & in this way greatly facilitates the process of digestion. This one of the most valuable medicines, belonging to the Class of tonics, & should therefore always be tried in every case of Dyspepsia, when such measures as induce

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A number of other articles, belonging to the Class of Lenses, have at different times, & by different Physicians, been occasionally employed with advantage in dyspepsia; but as none of them, as far as I am acquainted, have acquired any reputation for this purpose, I deem an enumeration of them unnecessary.

In cases of dyspepsia, when there are symptoms of an affection of the liver, and such cases, I believe are not uncommon; mercury employed in some of its forms, & in such quantity as merely to touch the gums, has often proved a most invaluable remedy. And in case to obtain ease, where every other remedy had failed, I have known mercury have been used with the effect of producing permanent relief & cure, it should be given in small dose, & continued for a considerable time. I might perhaps, feel a delicacy in urging the employment of the medicine, had not the high authority of Dr. Keil, Dr. Hooper, & Mr. Blunell, all of whom bear the strongest testimony of its efficacy, in relieving disease, of the digestive organs. Which of the preparations of mercury is best suited for this purpose, I am unable to determine. The preparation which I have seen employed with so much advantage, was calomel in combination with rhubarb & opium. It was, generally taken just before the patient went to bed & always had the effect of producing a regular evacuation of the bowels, once in the twenty four hours.

The cases where the employment of this remedy is ^{most particularly} indicated, are all such as exhibit symptoms of a diseased liver or pancreas, or where the disease has continued for a considerable length of time & where the organs of the parts, require some powerful alterative. What would be ^{the propriety of the employment} ~~the propriety~~ in more recent cases of the disease is a question which I am wholly unprepared to answer! I am disposed to believe however that it would be prejudicial.

Another remedy which I would recommend is blood-letting. To Dr. Ross I believe we are indebted for the discovery of this remedy. From the beneficial effects, which he has derived from its employment, & from the success which he attended it with, by other practitioners, I am inclined to believe that the lancet well in skilful hands, becomes one of the most powerful instruments that has yet been discovered in subduing this perverse and obstinate disease. The state of the pulse has, & still, continues to be too much overlooked by practitioners, in their treatment of this disease. From the irregularity & sometimes, tension of the pulse in diseases of the digestive organs, I am disposed to suspect that there sometimes exists a congestion in the vessels of the stomach. And may not such congestion have existed in these cases, where blood-letting proved so highly successful? This question solicits a reply from those who have witnessed the case, in which the lancet was used.

I come in the last place to speak of the importance of exercise in removing debility & of increasing the strength & tone of the system. As the state of the mind has such a powerful influence over the operation of the body, & as it is, generally so materially affected in this disease, an attention to the means of counteracting its baneful effects, naturally suggests itself in this place. For as the poet Armstrong has very aptly observed:—

"To please the Fancy is no trifling good;
Where Health is studied; For whatever moves,
The mind with calm delight, promotes, the just
And natural movements, of the harmonious frame."

To dissipate the gloom which usually overtakes the mind in this disease, cheerful society should be recommended, when the mind might be pleasantly amused without becoming tired or fatigued. Travelling through romantic or well cultivated countries

will by presenting to the mind a succession of new & interesting objects, have the happiest effect in diverting it from the melancholy thoughts in which it is prone to indulge & by the exercise with which it is accompanied, will impart strength & vigour to the system. To obtain however the greatest possible benefit from travelling the dyspeptic should procure an intelligent & pleasant companion. Where this is too expensive or where it cannot be conveniently undertaken riding or a tolerable hard trotting horse for several miles every day, will frequently be found very serviceable.

Sea-bathing has been recommended in some cases, it is said to have been attended with the happiest effects. Of this mode of exercise however I must observe that I do not entertain a very favourable opinion. Because the exercise of the body is, in this case merely passive & the mind from having little to occupy it would naturally be inclined to dwell upon the disease & by this means aggravate instead of alleviating its symptoms. Another objection of greater force is the costliness which usually attends most persons when at sea.

Then convenient, cultivating a small garden will be found a very agreeable way of taking exercise. If the patient can become so much engaged, as to feel ~~great~~ interested in the success of his labours I am persuaded that it would prove one of the most successful means that has been ^{yet} suggested in removing chronic debility of the stomach. Walking pretty briskly for a mile or two every day, is in some cases very useful. Calling, singing or splitting wood is a very excellent way of exercising the body. In cases when from the badness of the weather or other causes the patient cannot take exercise in the open air, there is a play-balls ball

door, that affords a very pleasant exercise, and is to be particularly recom-
mended from its exciting a little interest & solicitude in the mind, without
producing any demoralising effect. The manner in which this is played
is so familiarly known to most persons, as to render any description
unnecessary. There are a great many other modes of taking exercise
which may be resorted to with advantage, which have not been here
noticed, & which may be found described by different authors.

In employing exercise of any kind, care should be taken, never
to carry it to the extent of inducing fatigue, it should likewise never
be used when the stomach is empty, as prejudicial effects would
thereby be induced. Whatever be the mode of exercise, the patient
should always be attentive in keeping the feet warm & dry. The
time most proper for taking exercise, is about two hours after taking
breakfast & about the same time after dinner.

With this I conclude the subject, being fully aware that a
great deal more might be said upon the nature & treatment of this
disease which has not been noticed in this essay. As the fluctuating
state of my health has prevented me from investigating the nature
of this disease so extensively, or I could have wished, or of arranging
what I had collected on the subject in the system & order that was
intended, I submit the essay with all its errata & imperfections,
relying much upon the candour & liberality of those by whom it is
to be judged.

